

PETER STRAUSS RANCH



his enchanting oak woodland has long been a source of dreams, visions, and memories. Inhabited for thousands of years by the Chumash people, this area became part of Rancho Las Virgenes after Spanish colonization. The original coast live oak, used as the marker in the 1881 land grant survey, still stands just west of the swimming pool. The upside-down letter “T” is still evident in the bark. The “vision of enchantment” continues at this site today with hiking, concerts, picnics, and art exhibits. Explore this peaceful refuge and create some memories of your own.

Dreams— At the turn of the century, Harry Miller purchased the ranch as a weekend retreat from his residence and automobile factory in Los Angeles. His patented master carburetor and “Miller Specials,” featured at Indianapolis 500 car races, brought him fame. In 1926, Harry built many structures including the stone ranch house, the “look out tower” and the aviary. The Depression and his attempt at aircraft-engine development resulted in financial ruin, the loss of the ranch and an end to his dreams.

Visions— In the mid 1930’s, Warren Shobert and Arthur Edeson purchased the ranch, transforming the place into “Shoson”—a fairyland of charm and a paradise for children and adults. Later, a dam was constructed on Triunfo Creek, creating a small lake. The resort was renamed “Lake Enchanto.” Competition from other, larger amusement parks and resorts led to the decline of “Lake Enchanto.” It fell into disrepair and closed around 1960.

Memories— Actor Peter Strauss was deeply moved by the area’s natural beauty while filming the mini-series “Rich Man, Poor Man” at Malibou Lake in 1976. He purchased the property and restored the site to its original splendor, living here until 1983. Due to his sensitivity and concern for the natural environment, Strauss sold the ranch to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The National Park Service purchased the ranch in 1987 as part of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, dedicated to the preservation of our natural and cultural history.



National Park Service
Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreation Area
401 West Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks CA 91360
www.nps.gov/samo

Visitor Center 805-370-2301
In emergency: dial 911

Information & Safety

Natural and historic features are protected by law and may not be collected.

Dogs must be on leash at all times. For the consideration of others, please clean up after your pet.

Firearms are not allowed in public lands in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

Water from streams is not safe to drink due to possible contamination or the presence of the giardia protozoan.

Wasps and bees are plentiful during the summer months. Please cover foods and sweet beverages while picnicking.

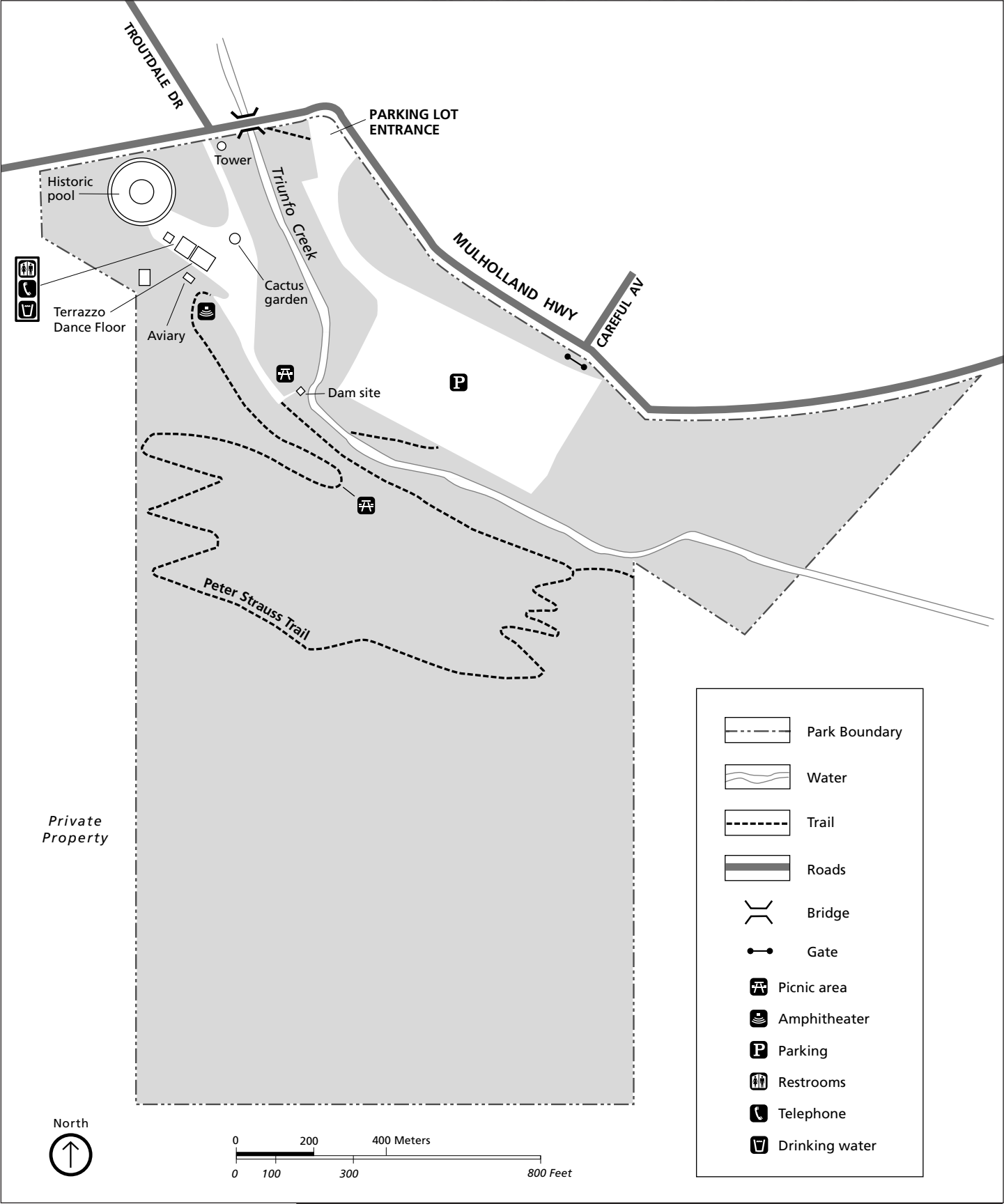
Trail closures will be in effect during and following significant rainfall to protect park resources. Trails will be re-opened when dry enough to sustain public use.

Hikers must yield to horseback riders.

Stay on established trails and avoid ticks, poison oak and rattlesnakes. Please respect private property.

Fire is a constant danger. Open fires are prohibited. Charcoal and gas stoves are allowed in designated picnic areas only. Smoking and all fires are not permitted during times of high fire danger.

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What to look for today

Peter Strauss Trail 0.6 mile round trip, easy— This pleasant trail is suited for the novice hiker. It traverses chaparral and oak riparian habitats. Late winter and spring are the best times to view native plants in bloom.

Terrazzo Dance Floor/Patio—Made in 1939 of imported Italian terrazzo tile with a pointed star to commemorate “Hollywood,” the patio was a popular place for “Big Band” concerts and dancing in the 1940’s. In the 1950’s, country singers such as Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and the Mandrell Sisters performed here for a local television station.

Swimming Pool—Built in 1940, this was the largest pool on the west coast at the time. It had a capacity for 650,000 gallons of water and could accommodate up to 3,000 people.

Lake Enchanto Dam—Built in the 1940’s, this dam created the centerpiece of “Lake Enchanto.” It was a popular spot for fishing, rowing and swimming. The dam was breached in the late 1960’s by severe flooding. Part of the dam structure still exists in the creek bed near the picnic area.

Parking area—The main parking lot is located east of the ranch on Mulholland Hwy. Walk back across the bridge on Mulholland Hwy and enter main gate into the ranch. Parking lot gates are open from 8am to sunset.